

Music focus of 2012 Brampton Indie Arts Fest

Brampton Guardian

Not only will indie arts supporters be able to see dozens of musicians and visual artists for free at this year's Brampton Independent Arts Festival (BIAF), but there will be opportunities for patrons to take the stage as well. Included in the line-up for the two-day festival running Oct. 4 and 5— which is aiming to feature roughly 26 musical performers in two stage areas— is an open mic session capping off both Thursday and Friday nights. Those interested can sign up the day of the festival.

The festival, taking place at the Rose Theatre, will feature music in The Electric Hall (main lobby), The Unplugged Studio (Studio Two) and the Fountain Stage of Garden Square, as well as visual art in the upper lobby. The new open mic segments will be featured in The Unplugged Studio.

The return of the festival to downtown Brampton highlights the rich pool of indie artists in and around the city, say organizers.

Scott Lale, the city's manager of arts and culture, said this year's event, although slightly different in format, is very much focussed on Brampton musical talent.

"There have been some changes (to the format) which have been in response to the artists that came forward," he explained, adding that earlier this year there was an open call for artists interested in participating. "We really wanted to focus on Brampton talent in any genre of art."

The result was a large number of bands and musicians, a few visual artists, but no performance artists.

"We changed the program to facilitate that," said Lale.

A selection committee was assembled for the first time, this year, to choose the lineup of artists. Lale said the committee is composed a variety of people from the community, but doesn't include any city staff.

A press release issued by the city, the event's sponsor and organizer, says "This year, BIAF will feature extraordinary local talent, which promises to give audiences a true indie experience. The City of Brampton is thrilled to provide a space for local artists to come together, and showcase their talents for the community."

Headlining this year's event is Ubiquitous Synergy Seeker, who will perform at 10 p.m. on Oct. 5 on the Fountain Stage (weather permitting). Also included in the line up, which is subject to change, is: The Red Boy, The Roger III Company, Meghan Morrison, Buddy Black, CDH Live, Lucy Diamond, New Design, The Stew Gunn Band, Unbuttoned, AHI, Hayley Stark, Bosa, Terina Faye, Elize Stolk, Kavva, Shae, Chris Strazz, Identity, EnKaye, Courtney Lynn Music, Texas King, Jessica Speziale, William "Beej" Bula, and DJ Jason Prine.

Displaying their amazing works of art in the upper lobby for the festival, will be local visual artists Alex Rodway, Katrina Harvey, Chamila Belleth, Ryan Thomson, Shirley Liang, and Kathleen Beaulieu.

Other changes this year include the emcee for the evening; long-standing festival host Curtains the Puppet will be replaced by J Board.

There was some concern by BIAF founder (who founded the festival with key supporters from the city) and previous curator, Rich Marsella, about changes to this year's event.

Though he wasn't available to curate the 2012 festival, he had still hoped to be involved in choosing a curator that would "ensure that the philosophy of the festival was maintained, and that it continued to push the envelope."

Instead, he feels he was shut out of the process entirely.

Lale said that because Marsella wasn't available, they took the opportunity to make some changes to the festival.

But Marsella, a musician, also voiced concern that this year, for the first time, BIAF performers will not be paid.

"I worked within the budget that the city provided me, and spent it accordingly on artists," he told

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. "With this amazing model, you get artistic buy-in, from artists of varied levels."

Lale said the decision to stop this practice was necessary to make the festival happen and keep it as a free event. Those performing all understand there will be no compensation, he added.

"They are being given the opportunity to perform in a neat venue at higher level, and we are working on bringing in industry people— agents, managers, etc.— so they can see what talent is out there," said Lale.

Marsella said although he still supports the idea of an indie festival in the city, he'd like to see organizers change the name if this year's model of the BIAF continues.

"I'm am not saying that this model won't work— and for Brampton's sake, I truly hope that it does," he said. "But I'd rather they change the name and allow me to be proud of what we achieved rather than see it continue along the lines it is ... if moves



Ubiquitous Synergy Seeker will headline the 2012 Brampton Indie Arts Fest, which runs Oct. 4 and 5 at the Rose Theatre.

like not paying artists are going to be a part of the festival's future.”

The BIAF, said the city, is an event designed to appeal to a wide audience. It is all ages, and free. It runs Oct. 4 and 5 from 7 to 11 p.m. at the Rose Theatre. For a complete festival schedule, visit www.rosetheatre.ca (<http://www.rosetheatre.ca>).